Fall armyworm reportedly damaged maize crops (FAO-GIEWS, September 2019) and swarms of locusts formed on the western coast and moved northward (FAO, December 2019), damaging crops, livestock pastures and beehives, reducing food quantities for own consumption and sale (FEWS NET, December 2019). Total cereal production in 2019 was forecast at 385,000 tonnes, about 12 percent below the previous year’s harvest (FAO-GIEWS, September 2019).

NUTRITION OVERVIEW

An estimated 7.4 million people required malnutrition treatment or prevention intervention, including 3.2 million children aged 6–59 months and over 1 million pregnant and lactating women in 2019 (OCHA, February 2019).

Several districts in Taizz, Abyan, Hajjah and Lahj governorates had a ‘very high’ GAM prevalence (above 20 percent), according to SMART surveys and Emergency Food and Nutrition Assessments (EFSNA) conducted between 2016 and 2019 in 74 districts of seven governorates (EFSNA/SMART, 2016–2019).

Nutrition surveillance in 42 districts also showed that 25 percent of children aged 6–59 months were affected by wasting and 52 percent by stunting from January–October. Results in Hodeidah have consistently shown a wasting prevalence above 30 percent since June (WHO, October 2019).

Women’s dietary diversity was extremely poor with around 70 percent having a diet based on just two or three food groups (WFP, October 2019). Even before the escalation of conflict, child-feeding practices were poor with only 15 percent of 6–23 month-olds consuming the minimum acceptable diet required for growth and development (DHS, July 2015).

Prevalence of anemia was a ‘severe’ public health concern for children aged 6–59 months (83.5 percent) and for reproductive-age women (69.6 percent) (WHO, 2016).

Drinking water quality was another concern for malnutrition: 37 percent of households did not have access to ‘at least basic’ drinking water services (UNICEF and WHO, 2017).

Yemen’s health care system has been devastated by conflict with almost half (49 percent) of the health facilities not or only partially functioning due to lack of staff, supplies, inability to meet operational costs or because of access constraints. Equipment at hospitals is non-functioning or obsolete, and many health personnel have not received regular salaries for two years (OCHA, December 2019). As a consequence, approximately 19.7 million people lack adequate healthcare, of whom 14 million are in acute need of assistance (ACAPS, December 2019).

Over 2.2 million suspected cholera cases were reported in Yemen from October 2016–November 2019 with 3,886 related deaths (WHO, January 2020).